GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1592
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2005
SMUGGLING OF SANDALWOOD
Hamza Shri T.K.;Krishnadas Shri N.N.

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of the large scale smuggling of sandalwood in the country;

(b) if so, the number of cases reported during the last three years, State-wise;

(c) whether any sandalwood scandal has come to light recently;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Government is aware of certain sandalwood processing factories, working in certain States, despite the sandalwood has been declared as a non-cutting wood in the country;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the steps taken by the Government to check the same and punish the offenders?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA)

(a) Yes, Sir. The incidents of smuggling of sandalwood have been detected from time to time in different parts of the country.

(b) The details are given in Annexure-I.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) 23 sandalwood factories were found functioning illegally mostly in Palakkad, Kannur, Kasargode and Malappuram districts of Kerala. These factories have been ordered to be closed down vide Government of Kerala's G.O. (MS) No/17/2005/F&WLD dated 09.02.2005.

(e)&(f) There is no restriction on authorized felling of sandalwood trees or processing of the wood. Public sector units and the private sector units under the licence given by the States are reported to be functioning.

(g) The details of steps taken by the concerned States to protect the Sandalwood forests are given in Annexure−II

ANNEXURE-I

ANNEXURE IN RESPECT OF PART (b) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1592 FOR 14/03/2005 REGARDING SMUGGLING OF SANDALWOOD

The number of incidents reported regarding the smuggling of sandalwood, State-wise and year-wise

S. No.	States	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
1	Kerala#	380	252	376
2	Tamilnadu	408	250	111
3	Karnataka	885	4293	484
4.	Andhra Pradesh	32	20	32

No incidents have been reported from other States/Union territories.

= For Kerala the figures are for calendar years 2002, 2003 & 2004 respectively.

ANNEXURE-II

ANNEXURE IN RESPECT OF PART (G) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1592 FOR 14/03/2005 REGARDING SMUGGLING OF SANDALWOOD

The details of steps taken by the concerned States to protect the Sandalwood forests are as under:

1. Kerala:

(i) Creation of Special Task Force and deployment of Rapid Action Force.

(ii) Supply of arms and ammunitions to the staff.

(iii) Involvement of local people in sandal protection through `Vanasanrakshana Samithies' and

(iv) Intensive patrolling of forest areas.

2. TamilNadu:

(i) Creation of Striking Force

(ii) Creation of smaller beats for intensive protection

(iii) Provision of vehicles, wireless, arms etc. to the staff

(iv) Appointment of Tribals as sandalwood protection watchers

3. Karnataka:

(i) Establishment of a separate vigilance wing for the purpose

(ii) Fully equipped forest Mobile squads and staff at all levels

(iii) Establishment of a network of forest check posts and Forest Protection Camps in sensitive areas

4. Andhra Pradesh:

Regular patrolling by protection staff, flying squads and the special mobile parties in the vulnerable areas of Andhra Pradesh

Moreover, the actions taken to punish the offenders are as follows:

State-wise and Year-wise details of accused arrested

S. No.	States	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
1	Kerala#	486	418	318
2	Tamilnadu	398	295	139
3	Karnataka	Not reported	431	385
4.	Andhra Pradesh	22	12	14

No incidents have been reported from other States/Union territories

= For Kerala the figures are for calendar years 2002, 2003 and 2004 respectively.